

Congo News Letter

40.2



APRIL 1949

BANZA MANTEKE - 70th ANNIVERSARY

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Congo News Letter

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No. 2

BANZA MANTEKE THE FIRST SEVENTY YEARS

RUTH AND MARTIN ENGWALL

BANZA MANTEKE can this year celebrate its 70th anniversary as a Mission Station, having been founded in 1879 by Rev. Henry Richards. It was at first a station under the Livingstone Inland Mission, later taken over by the American Baptist Missionary Union.

Mr. Richards first established himself in the valley at a place called Nkondo where he labored for seven years before winning his first convert. It was a terrific struggle between the powers of heathen darkness and the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many attempts were made on Mr. Richards' life and the witch doctors who saw their age-long power threatened by the preaching of the Good News did their utmost to hinder his work. It was while still at Nkondo that the movement known as "the Pentecost on the Congo" had its beginning. What a joy it must have been after the long years of waiting to see the people bring in their fetishes to be burned and accepting Christ as their Saviour. Tata Malutama remembers how the fetishes were piled up 4 meters high ready for Mr. Richards to light the fire. Before doing this, however, he would first preach to the people about the power of God which was so much greater than that of their fetishes. Crowds were present who were sure that something terrible would happen. When they saw that their fetishes were powerless they turned away from the witch doctor in disgust and professed their belief in Jesus Christ. The joy of Mr. Richards was not unmixed with sorrow because it was at Nkondo that he had to bury his first wife.

According to Malutama it was Dr. Small who advised Mr. Richards to move the station up on the hill-top known as Banza Manteke. Many of the early Christians, too, moved to the new site on account of much persecution in the villages.

FIRST MISSIONARIES:

Those who knew Mr. Richards fondly speak of him as "Ngu'ankazi" which means maternal uncle, and he is the only one who has been honored by this name in our field. Like their maternal uncles he helped them in their difficulties and it is said that no one was ever turned away from his door unhelped. Our people also speak in glowing terms of "Mama Ngu'ankazi" and her medical work and of her sister "Mama Miss Cole" and her school work. Reverend Harvey is remembered as the great singer who also translated a great number of the hymns they love to sing. They speak also of his patient teaching of the Bible to the young evangelists. Tata Malutama spoke only the other Sunday of how willingly the missionaries served. He mentioned Mrs. Ingham who came back to Congo against the doctors' advice. "She loved the women and children and would pick up the dirty babies and lovingly bounce them on her knees. When she died the Congo women came to cry," and then he added, "Her grave is with us." The same year that his wife died Mr. Ingham was trampled to death by an elephant.

Of other missionaries who served their apprenticeship at Banza Manteke before going on to other stations we might mention Dr. and Mrs. Leslie, Dr. Mabie, Dr. and Mrs. Moon, Rev. and Mrs. Hill, Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Moody and Dr. and Mrs. King.

THE CHURCH STARTED:

We today are helped by the wise building of the Banza Manteke Church. Mr. Richards did not believe in imposing any church rules but all rules were voted by the members themselves and so no one can say that the rules are the white man's rules. He even went so far as to receive into membership those who were polygamists and those who drank. The one prerequisite was belief in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. He had faith that the believers themselves would come to realize the incongruity of being a Christian and having more than one wife or of using intoxicating drinks—and he was proved right !

SELF SUPPORT:

While there were sporadic attempts at self-support during

Mr. Richard's time it was Rev. John E. Geil who dared to propose that the entire church be governed by this principle. In this he was ably supported by Tata Malutama who took upon himself the onerous task of visiting all the villages and persuading the people to accept this principle. Probably only missionaries can realize what a terrific task this was and how unpopular ! Yet self support has been probably the most potent factor in raising this church to a higher level of self-respect and stability, as well as growth in Christian virtues.

About the year 1922 it was decided to consolidate the fields of the Palabala and Lukunga stations with that of Banza Manteke, to be administered from the latter station. Then in 1940 an exchange of fields was made with the Swedish Mission by which we acquired their Mukimbungu field in exchange for our territory lying north of the Congo River. The present field thus covers an area of about 5000 square miles surely, enough of a parish for the single evangelistic missionary ! Especially since much of the visitation still has to be done on foot, owing to lack of roads.

NEW SITE:

The Old Banza Manteke hill-top is high, cool and healthy. From it one has a most gorgeous view of literally hundreds of hills which change their hue with the weather, the seasons and the time of day. As a family we enjoyed it there for 8 years. As far back as 1923 Mr. Geil began hunting for a new site for our station because the old hill-top just didn't have enough available land for gardens for our growing Boarding School, and in 1927 work was begun on the present site which is actually known as Sona Mpangu. One who sees the station today can hardly realize the tremendous effort made by Mr. and Mrs. Geil and Miss Bonar and their Congolese staff to make the station the beautiful place it is today. Their fight against white ants and other insects destroying trees as soon as they were planted is one of dogged determination. In some instances trees had to be planted dozens of times and constantly watched over before they would grow. Today it is a station of which they can justly be proud.

The main reason for moving here, however, was to get sufficient garden land for our constantly growing Boarding School

and we have needed every bit of it. In fact we have recently secured the consent of a neighboring village to grant us additional land for the purpose.

We are very happy to have our own hydro-electric power instalation which provides us with electric lights as well as running water. This is a gift of the late Mrs. Shirk of Chicago who when visiting here in 1928 vowed that we should not have to work by the light of kerosene lamps and have all our water carried up from the valley.

Speaking about the church today one could mention the number of baptisms of those just beginning to walk in the Light of the Gospel. It was indeed an inspiring sight to see the hundreds who were baptized on the Bangu last summer and to sit down with them at The Lord's Supper. (Bangu is one of eleven district churches or associations into which our field has been divided, each directed by a "pastor" or district superintendent) However, let us instead look for some evidences that the Gospel message has been understood and has been assimilated into the minds of the Congo Christians.

LEADERS IN THE CHURCH TO-DAY:

We have already spoken of TATA JOSUA MALUTAMA who has spent his entire life in the service of the Lord and is still going strong in spite of his 70 years. Missionaries have come and gone for many decades at Banza Manteke but Malutama remains on hand to help and guide them all. We should never think of starting anything new without first talking it over with Tata Malutama. Often your ego is very much deflated as he tells you that the very thing you are proposing and for which you thought could just about take out a patent right was tried many years ago and he can tell you the results. Those of us who have come to know him and claim him as a friend value his advice highly and enjoy talking things over with him. His influence can hardly be overestimated whether in our B.M. field or throughout our Conference where he is well known and highly esteemed. Mama Hanna, his wife, was one of the earliest Christians baptized by Mr. Richards and they set an example in family-life that shines as a beacon light to the younger generation.

His son REMY MALUTAMA follows in his father's footsteps and has dedicated his life to the Lord's service. He is at present in the Camerouns attending an institution of higher learning in order to better fit him to help his people.

MELI TOMAVOVA, one of our Bible women, just returned after visiting 25 villages. When asked: "In what village were you the happiest?" she immediately answered that she was happiest in the villages where she had won someone to Christ, not where she had been most lavishly entertained as so many others would have answered. In one village a woman pleaded with the missionary and the Christians to pray that she might regain her health in order to be able to give to the Lord's work again.

Or take BENJAMIN TONDUANGA who is my right hand man (mine, did I say, he is my wife's helper as well as helping any of the other missionaries) with the administrative work and INOKI, our Carpenter and NKUBI our chauffeur who hauls all our freight and building materials. Anyone of them could run off to a commercial center and get jobs paying them several times what they can get from us but they have no such intention. They want to stay on and help the Lord's work and what adds to our joy in this work is just having such colleagues as they to stand by you when the going is tough, and others are leaving.

ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITIES:

For years our people thought that there was no limit to the money the Mission had to spend but of late years at least those nearest us have come to realize that this is not so, and a couple of years ago when we needed another house for one of our teachers and just didn't have the money the Station Church voted, without any prompting whatever from the white man, to build the house from the church contributions. Also when they heard that money was short for buying food for the pupils they put up 2,500 francs for the purpose. The latest of their undertakings is the building of another school building. This has taken all their money and they have even had to go in debt but it shows what can be done when people "first give themselves to the Lord".

Congo is making rapid strides forward in a material way these days but we believe no real progress can be made unless the

spiritual resources of a people are tapped and that is our task at Banza Manteke for the next seventy years as well as in the past. "Tell my people that they go forward" is as applicable to our Banza Manteke church as it was to the Israelites of old.

EARLY DAYS AT BANZA MANTEKE

TATA JOSUA MALUTAMA

FROM the time Mr. Henry Richards, the first missionary, came to Banza Manteke, it was seven years before people began to believe in Christ. When they finally did accept Jesus, they brought their fetishes of all kinds to the station, called Nkondo, to be burned.

The station was called Nkondo (banana or plantain) because of the grove of those trees there. Mr. Richards had obtained permission from the chief and the people to build there. He built two large mud houses: one, a storehouse with several rooms to keep food for the school boys and various supplies and boxes; the other, to live in. The latter was the larger with three big rooms: two bedrooms at either end and, in the middle, a large living room, in which he also ate and sometimes held meetings or Bible classes.

Mr. Richards played a small portable organ which attracted many people to the station because it was so strange to them. They thought that the sound of the organ was the voice of the dead singing; that the bass notes were the voices of the old who had died, and the high notes those of babies who had died. So, many came to hear and see this strange object. Some would sit as near the door as possible so that if anything happened in the house, they could get out quickly. People thought at that time that the spirits of the dead were sent to the white man's land by Mr. Richards at night in his trunks and cases.

The fetishes of which I spoke above, when brought to the station, were heaped up on the ground, twelve or fourteen feet high, and crowds of people came to watch in fear because they thought the spirits of the dead would cause something terrible to happen

to them and to their villages. Then Mr. Richards struck a match and the fetiches began to burn. The first believers, too, helped to light the fire, which continued to burn all day and all night, and nothing terrible happened at all. Then it was that, all around Banza Manteke the salvation of Jesus and His Spirit entered people's hearts. The good news spread in all directions and the villages which had long been enemies to one another now made peace and people began to love one another and to teach and strengthen one another. No one was sent out by Mr. Richards, but people of their own accord started out to spread the Gospel in the villages and wherever they saw people—on the paths or in their gardens. Wherever they went they sang hymns all the time and taught in the name of Jesus.

Mr. Richards did not know at all where the first Christians were carrying the Gospel. But almost every day people brought in their fetiches to him to be burned. So he was extremely busy preaching, healing the sick and teaching school as well. Every one was surprised to see a white man work so hard. He had a good many medicines with which he treated the sick. He also started to teach the school boys to plant gardens.

When the news of all this reached England, Mr. Richard's country, they all rejoiced. Not long after that, Henry Stanley passed through on his way to what is now Leopoldville. Then Dr. Small came and lived with Mr. Richards. But in a few months they left the old station and moved up on top of the hill, called Banza Manteke (town of mud). There was only one person living there then because people did not like to build on top of a hill on account of the wind.

MEDICAL WORK BEGUN:

Dr. Small did not operate much. But he treated patients with medicines, opened abscesses, or pulled teeth. The first operation he did was on a woman, Mabengi Mabonda, whose Christian name was Mbasi (angel). She was my mother and was one of the first Christians, having been baptized when I was about twelve years old. (All I am writing I did not hear from any one, but saw myself.) When Dr. Small operated on my mother (he removed a small growth from the side of her forehead), everyone was ter-

ribly surprised, and people came from all around to look at her and at the doctor too. Many clapped their hands in amazement. But Dr. Small did not do many operations. Three or four hernias, I remember, he did, but not many.

STATION ESTABLISHED:

When we moved up on top of the hill to Banza Manteke, a mud house was built behind the place where Mr. Richards later lived. There he and his wife and Dr. Small lived together. Later Mr. Ingham came to build another house (frame) and to have charge of the transport of loads—getting carriers to take the loads to Lukunga and on up to what is now Leopoldville. At that time the work was divided among the missionaries: Mr. Richards, evangelistic work—to teach and build up the church; Dr. Small, medical work; Mr. Ingham, the store and transport and station work; Mrs. Ingham, school work when she was well enough; Mrs. Richards, school work and helping the doctor. When Dr. Small went home, Mrs. Richards took his place, and her work was tremendously appreciated by everyone, and by the white people too. I know not a few white people (some, government officials) came to Banza Manteke to seek her help. When Miss Cole came to take charge of the school, then Mrs. Richards did nothing but medical work.

Many different white people have worked at Banza Manteke, but I have not time to tell about their work. I only want to say that the trials and hardships of the first missionaries have borne tremendous fruit in this land of Congo, because they consecrated themselves entirely to their task of winning hundreds of people to Christ, and through them we have received salvation and eternal life.

When I think of these early missionaries, I am greatly helped and strengthened, because they were always so long-suffering and forgiving. If anyone did wrong, they tried to persuade him to do the right thing. If anyone left their work, they would try to get him to come back. They used to call in secretly whoever had done wrong and talk things over with him. Mr. Harvey used to visit the sick and pray for them and try to win them to Christ. In earnestness and persistence in prayer no one exceeded Mr. Harvey. The outstand-

ing characteristics of Mr. and Mrs. Richards were goodness and kindness. Once when a boy stole from another missionary, he would not dismiss him, but kept him on and taught him, and because of this that boy was converted and became a different person.

Jesus has borne with us in all our stubbornness and disobedience so that we might be saved and transformed by His love.

* * * * *

The writer of the above article is our greatly beloved and respected pastor and is one of the very few left who witnessed the early days of the mission. It was he who later, under the guidance of Rev. John Geil, developed self-support in the Banza Manteke churches, and has been right-hand helper and advisor to all later missionaries as well, carrying through many a difficult task and straightening out many an awkward situation that had perhaps baffled the missionary. A tall, fine-looking, erect man, now nearly seventy years old, he continues his preaching and pastoral work on the station and its out-posts, supervises all the garden and station work of the three hundred school boys here, and is friend and advisor of all who come to him.

His oldest son holds a very highly-paid position of responsibility in Chanic, a shipbuilding company at Leopoldville. One of his other sons, Remy, was the first and only candidate to pass the entrance examinations to the recently organized college for French-speaking Africans in the Camerouns, under the auspices of several Protestant missions, and is now there preparing himself to continue his work as leader of his people in the educational field.

MEDICAL WORK AT BANZA MANTEKE

HOWARD AND KATHERINE FREAS

THE BEGINNINGS:

There has always been medical work at Banza Manteke. From the very beginning in 1879, the first missionary, Rev. Henry Richards, dispensed simple remedies, bound up sores and ulcers, and treated patients for malaria and the ever-present intestinal parasites, at the same time preaching Christ and urging all to abandon their ancient fetishes and to put their trust in Him who died for them.

When Mr. Richards was joined by his wife, she, although not a nurse, made caring for the sick one of her special tasks. Tata Malutama, in his article, has already pointed out the large and successful part that Mrs. Richards played in the continuance of that work in addition to her school duties. When the first physician, DR. SMALL from England, came, she became his able assistant. After his departure, following a short term of service, she again continued to carry on the medical work until the coming of Dr. Leslie in 1894, except for six months when Dr. Craven was there.

It was DR. LESLIE who started the building of the first frame dispensary, built, as were all the early permanent buildings, of lumber from England, by the hands of natives from Accra, farther up the West African coast. The first dispensary had been one room of a mud storehouse. Later, when the church was built, one corner of it was made into a room for the medical work. So the building of Dr. Leslie's two-room, frame dispensary marked a real advance.

In 1898 DR. CATHERINE MABIE came to Banza Manteke, one of the first women medical missionaries to Congo. Then it was that women, many of whom had been heretofore hesitant to come to a man doctor, began to flock to the dispensary. She and Dr. Leslie each had certain hours, we are told, to work in this tiny building. Sometime later the mud ward was replaced by a small frame building, accomodating ten bedpatients. In 1911, Dr. Mabie, also a teacher, was called to serve at our new pastor's training school

at Kimpese. Thus Dr. Leslie carried on alone until he, too, left in 1915 to found the station of Vanga, in the Kwango.

The following year, however, DR. JUDSON KING came to Banza Manteke and, being a surgeon, as well as a physician, soon added another small frame building in which to operate. This was the set-up I found upon my arrival in 1925, following the departure of Dr. King for Sona Bata.

DR. FREAS BEGINS:

And this was all! Not only were there no instruments of any importance except for what I brought with me, but there was not even a pressure sterilizer for preparing surgical dressings. With no knowledge of the language and only one partially trained native helper, I plugged in. Thanks to the success of my predecessors, there was no lack of patients, even for surgery. Major operations were and still are a source of wonder to the native mind: To be "put to death", as they call it, by an anaesthetic, cut open, then sewed up and "brought back to life again" is a miracle no witch doctor can compete with. There was almost immediate need for additional bed space and it was not long before two mud wards were completed. Though there was no missionary nurse, the young men helping me rapidly became capable nurses, anaesthetists and surgical assistants. Their ability to learn and to acquire technical skills continually amazed me, especially their facility in the use of the microscope.

At this time laboratory work was becoming increasingly important, due to the prevalence of African sleeping-sickness, for the treatment of which a new specific remedy had only recently been discovered—tryparsamide. This disease can be diagnosed in the early stages only by a microscopic examination of fluid from the lymphatic glands. In order to discover these cases and to present the further spread of sleeping-sickness, it became necessary for us to travel among the villages and to examine entire populations. Of course, itinerating in the field has always been part of the work of every missionary. For the doctor this meant holding services and dispensing medicines, following a cursory examination. Now the additional examination of some eight thousand people twice a year, plus the record-keeping involved,

increased the work tremendously. This public health program was organized and administered by the Belgian Colonial Medical Service with missionary doctors co-operating.

SUB DISPENSARIES:

During these itinerations the need of the people for medical service became increasingly apparent. Dr. King had previously opened a small dispensary at Lukunga, the site of one of our former mission stations. In addition to this, we now opened up several others, Congolese in charge of each one, trained in treating the more common diseases. It was not until our Sona Bata Medical Training School began graduating better trained assistants in 1938, however, that we were able to staff adequately these sub-dispensaries, of which there are now six.

Continued work in the villages also brought to our attention the large number of lepers, whom we knew needed to be isolated if the spread of this disease was to be checked. In 1932, having obtained a promise of some support from the government, we opened a small leper colony adjacent to the station. The original group of thirty has now increased to one hundred-thirty and is located on another site, two miles from the New Banza Manteke.

The removal of the medical work to the new station, twelve miles away from the old, took place in 1934. Though the rest of the work had gradually been transferred from 1927 on and a small dispensary was in operation under the direction of Miss Ehnborn, the nurse, the hospital was the last to be moved because no buildings to house it were built until 1934. Two wards and a utility building were constructed that year and the hospital work was transferred just as we departed for furlough, leaving Miss Ehnborn in charge.

In 1936, upon our return, we were designated to Sona Bata because of the death of Dr. King, whose place it was necessary to fill in order to carry on the recently organized school for medical assistants. Thus *Banza Manteke* was left *without a doctor*, though every two months one of the Sona Bata doctors would come down to examine patients, do surgical work, and conduct the annual health census in the villages. Since then, a nurse has been in charge, first Miss Ehnborn, then Miss Tice, followed by

Miss Youngsman, and again Miss Ehnborn, though there was one year when the nurse was on furlough, that the native nurses carried on entirely alone with the bi-monthly visits only of the Sona Bata doctor.

BACK TO BANZA MANTEKE:

Last year, after fourteen years without a resident doctor, Banza Manteke welcomed us back to work with them once more. Though it is the first time we have lived on the new station, we find two of our early helpers still here: Lutete Hezikayah, now a Sona Bata graduate, at the head, and Lutete Makima, my first house boy, in charge of the pharmacy. Miss Ehnborn was just leaving for furlough as we arrived, but, under her supervision, we found that the work had gone forward and several brick buildings had been erected: an open pavillion for the Baby Clinic, a fine maternity building nearing completion, as well as a dispensary, a small chapel, and ten small dwellings at the leper camp.

Not long after the arrival of a doctor, however, the present buildings soon proved inadequate to house the increased number of patients coming for treatment and surgical help. The Baby Clinic pavillion was enclosed with native mats and old army cots set up, but still all ambulatory patients must sleep on the floors of every available building, including the large cook house, as well as the big new grass house erected for them. The utility building, which was at the beginning temporarily arranged to house the dispensary, laboratory, examining and operating rooms, still serves the same purpose. Due to lack of funds, a main hospital building to fulfill these functions has never been erected. And now housing space for ambulatory patients is also urgently needed.

ASSISTANTS:

Several *infirmiers* (native nurses) or *aide-infirmiers* have been added to the staff, as well as two women helpers, one of whom is a graduate midwife from the Sona Bata Hospital. When Miss Murdock, a nurse who was here for only a few months, was assisting, a class of seven girls, all graduates of our station school for girls, was admitted to be trained as nurse-midwives. They are

continuing to be taught practical work under the supervision of the three women helpers, in the absence of a nurse, but are eagerly looking forward to the return of Miss Ehnborn and to training in the new maternity building.

Under Miss Ehnborn, also, the maternity work developed and grew, as did the baby clinic held at six different outposts. The first baby clinic was started at the old station in 1931 and the work has gone steadily forward until, this past year, there was an average weekly attendance of four hundred twenty-two in all the seven clinics together.

LEPER COLONY:

It was Miss Ehnborn, too, who helped develop the leper colony and was responsible for the erection of all twelve of its brick buildings. The phenomenal increase in the population there from forty-four to one hundred thirty-five during the past year is due to the return of a doctor with the new drug, Diasone, which the American Mission to Lepers contributed. The patients are most enthusiastic about the effects of the drug and the word has spread far and wide, bringing patients from all directions, so that here again our housing facilities are entirely inadequate. Many who have been treated over a period of years with chaulmoogra oil and its derivatives with very little effect, have had distinct improvement within three months of treatments with the new drug. Of the number there now, about one third are church members. One of them, a former village teacher-evangelist, is acting as their pastor and holds daily services, as well as an inquirers' class. We are hoping soon to open a school not only for the children but also for adults who wish to enroll.

Looking back over the years, one sees steady and satisfactory growth, which, however, might have been much greater had there been a resident physician from 1934 to 1948. The opportunities are unlimited, located as we are in the center of our Banza Manteke field, twelve miles, from the railroad on an auto road running between the railway and the Congo River, with commercial trucks meeting the two daily trains. Thus patients from Matadi, or even Boma, from Leopoldville and all along the line, as well as from both sides of the river, have ready access to our hospital.

The majority of our patients, however, whose villages are not reached by auto road, still come on foot, some having walked as long as a week (a hundred miles) to get here, coming from Portuguese Angola to the south of us.

MAKING CHRIST PRE-EMINENT:

In all of our work we try to make Christ pre-eminent not only in the spirit of love and kindness in which patients are cared for, but also in the conducting of daily services at the hospital, as well as by personal contacts. The popularity of our Protestant Mission hospital in Congo is due chiefly to this factor and to the faith of the people in us. Our buildings and equipment are far inferior to those found in most government and company hospitals. But the faith of the people in us as Christian medical workers and in our remedies and treatment is indisputable. One of our oldest medical workers insists that, even though the medicines used are the same as employed elsewhere, the results from their use are more affective! The Congolese say: "*Nzambi wena mu bilongo*,"—"God is in the medicine". What great works are wrought by faith! May God increase our faith and theirs that His work may continue to grow in Congo and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

BANZA MANTEKE BOARDING SCHOOL

MARY BONAR

IN looking for material on the beginning of the boarding school at Banza Manteke I found this autobiography of Timoteo Vingadio's that he wrote at the suggestion of Dr. Mabie. He is one of our finest Christian leaders through the Congo and to many of you in the homeland. In telling the story of his life he gives some very interesting side-lights on the beginnings of the church and school in our field.

When this story began Mr. Richards had been some years at Banza Manteke and had made some converts in the villages close by. These he had been teaching and had begun to send some of them out to carry the good news to the villages. Vingadio must have been ten or twelve years old when this part of the story began. I shall let him tell it:

TIMOTHY'S STORY:

"About this time stories about the white witch doctor were being told throughout the villages. They said that in his country he had committed a crime, had burned several boat loads of people and was here now getting the heads of the people that died to send them to his country. They also said he had his fetish that he would teach to people of this country that wanted it. That fetish consisted in learning to write and to read letters. Many people were reported to be using that fetish and were paying for it with many of their dead.

"These stories caused much fear in the hearts of the people. They did not want to hear the Word of God. They thought that that book was a fetish to help the white man to get the heads of the dead that he wanted. In spite of that we heard that many had turned their hearts to God and were learning to read and write. But those people were very much feared for they were thought to have paid the white man many lives for his fetish. Therefore if one wanted to accept the fetish of the white man he should be killed immediately, for he would destroy his village. The messengers of the word of God came to a village named Nsangu near our village. The people did not want to hear their message so fled into the

forest. The elders of my tribe were very much afraid and said what a calamity that they have crossed the Lunionzo (river) to our side.

"But God's Word could not be stopped" and before long we heard that people of Bete had received the Word. After that some teachers came to Lundu with the Good News. Many were converted therefore they sent a full time teacher to teach God's Word and also to teach the children to read and write. That first teacher was Davidi Mbadi. One day he asked my father if he would not receive Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Father said, 'Not yet'. The teacher Mbadi taught this song: 'There is joy in my heart, There is joy in my heart'. We children went near to hear but most of the older people wanted us to stay in the forest so that we would not be taken by the witchcraft of the white man. Another boy and I went into my father's house and looked out through the cracks in the door to see what was going on. We saw the teacher open a book and we were very anxious to go and hear what he said. I said: 'If it were not for the fetish I should like to learn that' Lukayika said: 'I would too.'

"Later my uncle took me with him one day when he went to Lufu where they were digging for the railroad. I saw a white man buy a chicken but he did not have any money in his pocket to pay for it. He wrote a little paper to another white man and that man gave us the money that the other man had agreed to pay. I was so surprised that a man could read on a little paper and know the thoughts of another man.

"What I had seen of those papers gave me a great desire to know more about them. I thought and thought until I decided that perhaps to know how to read and write would be a very good thing. I played with leaves from the trees tying them together to look like a book. Then I sang: 'There is joy in my heart, There is joy in my heart.' Folks said: 'If Vingadio were at Lundu with his relatives where there was a teacher he would doubtless be in school.' Others thought that if I wanted to know how to read a book I should have to give the only little brother that I had left. I was afraid; I wanted much to know how to read a book but to give up my brother would be very hard. One day the people of God came to our village and asked the people to come to worship. In the evening when some of the people had gathered

together the teacher opened the book then started a hymn, but it was not the one I had first heard. Now it was: 'Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing'. When they had finished the song the teacher said: 'Let us pray. First close your eyes'. The people were very much afraid for they thought if they closed their eyes they would come under the power of his fetish. Therefore many of them ran away from the meeting. Before long *my father was converted*. I was very glad for now that my father was saved I would have a way to learn to read. Not long after that a large paper came that could be hung on the wall, and we began to read, a, b, c, d etc. At first we kept our distance from the teacher when we read so that we could get away if he wanted to get us with witchcraft. As the days passed we became used to him and lost our fear. New words were added and we began to write numbers too. We children were very eager to learn and did not lose any time playing.

"After a while *I too was converted* but I did not then realize that that was the most important thing. My chief desire was to learn to read. We were in the catechumen's class. The teacher taught us and also said we should be baptized. I was still afraid that I would have to give my little brother; that I could not do. However the teacher was kind and told us that all that witchcraft story was a lie. The true knowledge of the Lord Jesus came gradually into my heart.

"I liked the teacher and stayed close to him. I tried to obey him and do what I could to please him. One day some other boys and myself were chosen to go with the teacher to Banza Manteke. When we came to the station and saw the white man, two things were struggling in my heart: fear and a desire to get a good look at that white man. If he looked at me I looked away for I did not want him to have any power over me. The teacher and the missionary talked for a long time then we went to Ndemba, the village of the teacher. When I returned to Lundu I had very many things to tell my people of the things that I had seen at Banza Manteke.

"When the teacher chose us to go to be baptized. We were three or four from our village but when we arrived at the station there was quite a crowd. We were first examined and those who were accepted went to the stream Kinsambi to be baptized. We

were a little afraid at first to go into the water but after the first person was baptized we saw that many of the things that we had been told about baptism were false. I was very happy for my baptism for I knew that my life had been changed. Sunday morning Tata Ngwankazi (Mr. Richards), preached. Then he gave us the hand of fellowship and said: 'Now you are received into the church of the Lord Jesus Christ; sin no more.'

"Then the teacher told us to go and get new names. It was the custom to be given a Christian name after baptism. I chose the name of Timothy. The teacher said, 'that name fits you very well. You are now Timoteo Vingadeo'. When I took communion I saw that it was not the body of a man and his blood as I had been told, but bread and wine only.

"The last week in December 1899, word came to Lundu that a white man was coming to Lundu to see the church people. The village was swept and in the evening he came with carriers to carry his loads. His name was Leslie. That white man was both a doctor and teacher. Many came to the evening service, some of them fearful for said they, this man is very kind. He might be a citizen of Lundu who had turned white after he had died.

"The following morning *Dr. Leslie visited the school*. After he heard us read he chose three boys to go to Banza Manteke. Two of them were not permitted to go. Their parents would not hear of their going to that place. My father said: Let Vingadeo go, Perhaps those books they are teaching will be useful some day, and if my boy does not know them he cannot be a chief. There is no need to ask his other relatives for this child belongs to me. Dr. Leslie left and I waited for the day to come when I should go to the station school. People were much surprized that my father had given his boy into the white man's hands. Many people, especially my boy friends tried to persuade me not to go to the white man. But the teacher Davidi Mbadi encouraged me and told me to shut my ears to all that talk for it was the devil's talk. When the day came for me to go, my father gave me a cloth, a shirt and some food. He told me that he would come to see me every communion Sunday, and for me not to be afraid or sad. *So I went to the school*.

"I was not sad there for I found other boys from some

other villages. There were twelve of us. Not long after we arrived one of the white women had a baby. They named it Dorothy. That was a great event for all the people for they thought that the white people did not have children, that they just changed from one form to another. My heart was much more at peace when I saw that the white people also had babies. That made them seem more like ourselves.

"I was most happy because school had begun and we had classes every day. One of our teachers was Dr. Mabie. The books I liked best were those that had pictures in them as well as the writing. They had pictures of the Lord Jesus in them. Those Bible stories that had pictures with them helped me much to understand the word of God. That is why I still like to use pictures in my teaching.

"The first time that the white teacher wanted to make shirts for us I was afraid because she wanted to take our measure. Each time she put the tape measure on me I jumped and got away. However when I saw that the rest of them were given new shirts I came and had my measure taken. I could not quickly forget all the stories that I had heard of those people, and thought they might take the measure of my soul instead of my body, and send it away. We were much surprized that there was cloth enough to make suits for all of us. The kindness of the white teachers caused our fear to gradually disappear and my joy increased with learning. However I was never the first in the class. I was glad that I was never the last either.

"I kept on in that school two years then when Dr. Mabie and Dr. Leslie went home on furlough the boy's school was closed. I was told that I could enter the training school for teachers. I asked myself if I could be a teacher and teach people. That was a big question in my heart. After vacation in the village I went back to the station to that school for it was as though a soft voice kept saying to me: You can be a teacher together with Jesus. Though I was still young I agreed to do my best."

* * * * *

BOARDING SCHOOL STARTS IN 1920:

For some years there was no boarding school at the station.

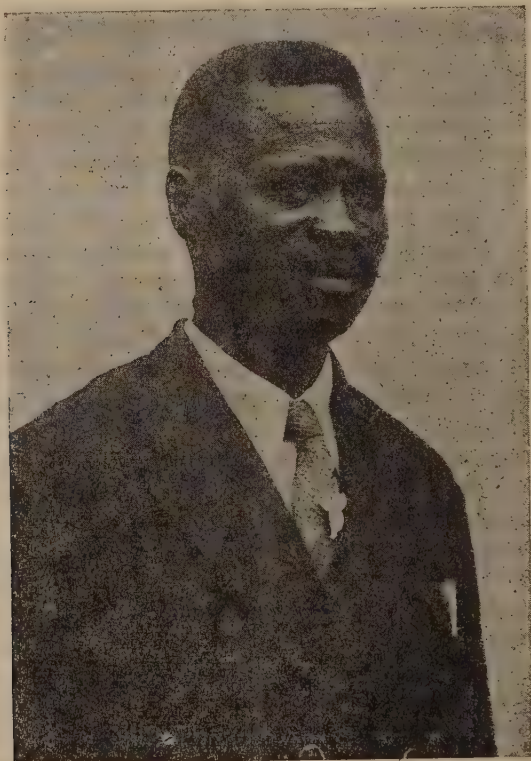
Miss Cole and Mrs. Richards had a good village school so that when I came to Banza Manteke there was not a grown woman or man there who did not know how to read or write. Mr. Richards and Mr. Harvey had a training school for teachers. But not until Mr. and Mrs. Geil came back in 1920 was a station school started to teach boys and girls from other villages in the field. That year there were 10 boys enrolled. The year following Miss Yost was there to help and one sees girls names too on the roll. When I came in 1927 there were less than a hundred in all in the boarding school. I had the beginning class that had a large number of boys in it that could neither read or write.

Later when folks got more interested in sending their children to school they had to be able to read and write before being accepted in the boarding school. We did not have room for all the children that wanted to come and that helped build up the village schools too. Pretty soon more readers began to qualify than we had room for so the regional school was developed. That was the creating of a semi-boarding school in each of the church centers under the supervision of the church and supported by native church funds. That has enlarged greatly the opportunity of the children in our field to get an education. There are now 14 of those schools in our field with an enrollment of 1247, employing 44 teachers. They have to pass an entrance exam to enter those schools and are doing a higher grade of work than we were doing here on the station not many years ago.

Here on the station we have gradually raised the entrance requirements and added more years on top until the boys that now enter the station school go into the fifth year class and do four more years on the station. This year there are 260 enrolled. *The girl's school* has also grown and under Mrs. Engwall's direction the girls are getting a good education. Six of the older girls are working in the hospital and maternity this year. We are looking forward to having an "*école ménagère*" (housekeeping school) next year. The girls are now doing much of the work that is included in that program.

The boys have a full program from six clock prayer service in the morning until the bell rings at nine in the evening. They have four and one half hours in class and three hours manual

labor each day besides two hours night classes each week. They study, do their home work and eat in between times. We are putting special emphasis on the practice school where all the second year "*Moyenne*" students take turns at teaching. They also have charge of a young people's service Sunday evening and a French program once a week.



Timotio Vingadio

Our school farm produces a lot of food during the year. Otherwise it would be impossible to have that many students in school. We have over 200 acres under cultivation this year. Some

of the students work in the shop and learn to make furniture, others work with the mason, others with the blacksmith and still others do basketry. All this work in class and out could not be done without the devoted work of the teachers and supervisors. They too have heard the still small voice that Timoteo heard . . . and are doing their best. May their tribe increase.

Our young people do not have the same difficulties to meet that Timoteo Vingadeo had to meet fifty years ago but it is not any easier for them to live Christian lives than it was for him. Temptations are more subtle and life much more complex with all that western civilization has brought to the Congo. However I have not known any boy to finish school here without being a Christian. Some fall by the wayside some others are fine Christian leaders of their own people.

THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING—VANGA 1949.

LEONARD GITTINGS

THEY had been told of the suffering peoples of Europe and had been reminded that even as they had been ministered to by churches in other lands, so they had a responsibility to minister to others outside their own circle, tribe, country.

Many of them had no regular income at all. Even those who worked for white men received only from two to five dollars per month. The price of food was high for them and so was the price of cloth. To most of them a cheap shirt and trousers or a length of cloth were luxuries. They took almost as much pain in purchasing a small article for a few francs as many an American takes in buying a new car or refrigerator.

The money began to come in. It piled up and overflowed my cash-box. Centimes, francs, bills, from 5 to 100 francs. Still the messengers came along the paths carrying their precious bundles. From little villages tucked away in the forests, and from centers where the white men had their palm-oil plantations Finally the last church post of the 22 reported, and we counted up the total. Almost 31,000 francs (over 700 dollars)! And this from people who hesitated at the purchase of a tiny bar of needed blue mottled soap. Some were better off than others but practically all of them lived a hand-to-mouth existence in this changing Congo.

At the same time we checked the figures showing what amount these Vanga churches had given to support their own churches, schools, and missionary projects in their own areas. Over half a million francs, more than 150,000 beyond their gifts of last year. Yes, the remarkable ingathering we are seeing in this field is evidently adding new forces to the life of the native church.

EXPRESSIONS OF A RETURNED MISSIONARY

ALICE O. JORGENSEN

SINCE last writing for the Congo News Letter, I have been away from the warm heart of Congo and up in the frozen regions of Minnesota, South Dakota and Canada. Al through the cold winter (which I enjoy) I was on deputation work, treavelling from north to south, and from west to east, getting into all kinds and conditions of climate and finding everywhere people who love the Lord and who love our Africans. Now that I have been back in Congo for five months, it seems as if I have not been away, and I have only the memories to pinch in order to make sure that I have had a furlough. But I do have more than the memories, in the love and prayers of friends in the land of cold winters and warm hearts.

Congo has more than a warm heart: it has chills and fever. The hot season comes and the sun's fierce rays draw forth earth's moisture until full clouds pour it back upon the earth again. The water-logged atmosphere brings such chilliness that one begins to look for warm clothing. The rains over, fog rolls out of the valley and the chill continues until the sun makes the shivering earth perspire again, and clouds of steam rise taking the moisture back to the clouds once more. Little wonder that our people have chills and fevers, and colds and that they become wheezy with asthma.

During the past month and more our hospital has been filled to overflowing. There is no guarantee against sickness for chiefs or for their people. Four chiefs and many of their people have come to our little hospital in the past few weeks. Medal chief Mosaka comes from the other side of the Inzia river. He has been appointed a medal chief by the government and his chieftainship reaches over a very large area. He is a man of authority and wealth. Much of his wealth is invested in wives. Formerly he had ninety-nine wives, but now he says he has a mere nineteen. When the doctor came from Vanga three of these were operated on. The old chief speaks of his seventy children, but he is not a Child of the King. Chief Ngwamvula from Kitona, was carried into the hospital in a hammock and he was desperately ill. Pneumonia

and jaundice almost brought him to the end of his days. Now he is slowly recovering, but he had a hard pull, having dissipated his strength in strong drink and through many other vices.

The doctor's first visit of the year coincided with Rev. Boone's visit in the Crusade for Christ through Evangelism. People came from far and wide; many from across the river, many from the south and a good number from the northern end of our field. Our hospital boasts 65 beds, but some of these are not very good and some of our wards are built from small logs and clay with grass roofs. At the end of ten days sixty newly operated cases filled our wards. Medical patients had to be sent home or had to find room as best they could in the mud wards. Our three concrete wards have a capacity of 42 beds, but we had to squeeze in 55 and the remaining five had to be put into the mud wards. Patients' helpers slept under the beds on mats, or found room wherever there were a few inches of space. Even the maternity ward was taken over and when obstetrical cases began to come in, they had to be housed in the delivery room, whose surplus space had already been put to another use, that of storing White Cross supplies that had recently come. Finally this room was so filled that one woman was resting on a cot in the doorway, until the first surgicals could be sent home and space be found for her and others. During one of my busiest mornings, the doctor was operating and I was trying to find beds for everyone, a man came running to call me. I must come quickly, "Nsenge has something to tell you—he feels very badly in his heart; his thoughts trouble him greatly and he can't wait." In his agitation the man talked so fast I could hardly understand him, and I thought the patient must be very ill. What could have happened? The man had just been operated on a short time before. When I reached his side he said, "Mama, God is speaking to me to confess my sin. Pray that God may forgive me." I talked to him and found out that this had happened quite some time ago. I asked him if he was a Christian and he said he was. He had become a Christian after he had had his quarrel . . I said, "Did you ask God to forgive you and he said, "Yes, but just now it all came back to me so vividly and I wanted to tell you and ask you to pray." So we did just that. I prayed and then the man prayed and the joy of the Lord

was restored and God's peace flooded this troubled soul. We pray that many who come within our doors may be troubled over their spiritual condition, and will seek help and forgiveness from the Great Physician of the Soul.

NEWS ITEMS

VANGA — Dr. Philip Austin of the Baptist Missionary Society, who spent six months at Vanga helping with the medical work here and at Kikongo and Moanza, returned to his station, Bolo-bo, in January.

The first building of the new girls' dormitories is completed and the second one has been started. Mr. Gittings hopes to have enough buildings finished so that they may be used in September when the new school year begins.

Many of the White Cross boxes which have been sent to Misses Dorothy and Doris Wisemen and Dr. A.C. Osterholm arrived in time for Christmas. We thank the friends at home who made it possible for us to give gifts to our pastors, teachers, nurses, and school children. We all had a Merry Christmas.

Our sincere thanks go to the Missionary Union of the Mt. Morris Church, Mt. Morris, Michigan, for their gift. We have received a beautiful copy of Sallman's Head of Christ for our church from them. At our last Communion Service the picture was presented to the church. All of us send our thank you.

Dr. Jean Austin has just returned from a three weeks' medical trip to Kikongo and Moanza. While at the two stations she performed 106 operations. Dr. Austin is very happy with her new Ford panel delivery truck.

Mr. Edwin Boone from our Leopoldville station spent a week with us in January, holding and conducting a home visitation campaign. During the week we spoke to more than 490 people, and had over 250 decisions for Christ. An average of thirty-five teams participated in the campaign. All of us had interesting experiences and were greatly blessed both by Mr. Boone's messages and by the visiting which we did. We have held the first

of the monthly follow-up visitation days, and have had splendid results.

KIKONGO — We are thankful because: *Word has at last come* granting us the right to occupy the land at Boko, where the new station among the Bayaka people is to be built, after nearly two years of waiting, since the request was made to the government.

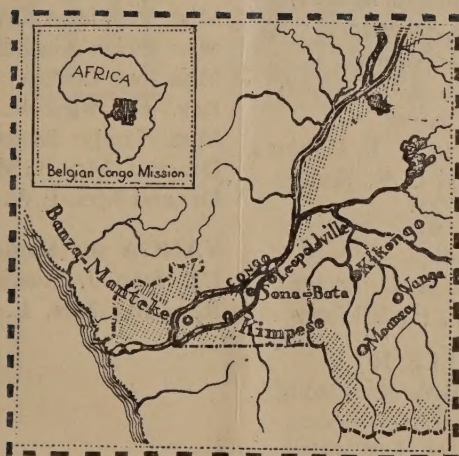
Lightning's stroke did not kill. Lightning is no stranger to Kikongo, and we are thankful that its recent visit did not kill Gertrude Anderson. She opened her door to see if the storm was going to prevent her visit to a nearby village, and was immediately struck by a blow which turned her completely around and left her with a leg broken just below the right knee. The papaya tree, in a direct line with the front door, withered and died a few days later. Gertrude cheerily continues to teach her classes and direct the work of her teachers from her "trapeze throne."

Grace Cooper spent *two weeks at a regional school* center where she saw some of the new literature which she has been preparing, in action. The need of materials in the vernacular is so crying that we wonder how the children manage to learn anything when they have so few books.

The Lewis Browns are settled into their humble quarters and are busy making preparation for the new Bible School as well as caring for the evangelistic outreach.—

NO COVER—WHY?

You are disappointed and so are we, not to have the usual colored cover. Production costs have risen so high that we find it necessary to make some adjustment. Nine tenths of our subscriptions are furnished by the missionaries in Congo, who would find it a burden if the subscription price were increased. This is an attempt to furnish our readers with as much material as possible by keeping to four issues a year and slightly reducing the number of pages, without raising the subscription price—Editor.



Belgian Congo Mission

BELGIAN CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY
with P. O. addresses*

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via Matadi

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Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Freas

Miss Ruth Dickey

KIKONGO sur Wamba

via Banningville

Miss Agnes Anderson, R.N.

Miss Gertrude Anderson

Rev. E. and G. Atkins

Rev. and Mrs. L. A. Brown

Miss Grace Cooper

Rev. and Mrs. W. F. Robbins

Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Smith

E.P.I. KIMPESE

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Miss Eva Shepard

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Miss Doris Wiseman

Miss Dorothy Wiseman, R.N.

* Precede name of each station with A.B.F.M.S., except Kimpese